

Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 IO-10 ISO-00 SAM-01 CIAE-00 DODE-00

PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01

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INFO AMEMBASSY LISBON

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CINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L CANBERRA 8594

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: AS, PT, PFOR

SUBJ: FOREIGN MINISTER'S STATEMENT -TIMOR

REF: CANBERRA 8199

1. SUMMARY: FOREIGN MINISTER PEACOCK MADE STRONG STATEMENT ON
TIMOR DEC 29. GOA DILEMMA IS HOW TO MAINTAIN GOOD RELATIONS
WITH INDONESIA WHILE SUPPORTING PRINCIPLE OF SELF-
DETERMINATION FOR TIMOR. END SUMMARY.

2. LAST NIGHT, DECEMBER 29, FOREIGN MINISTER PEACOCK MADE THE
GOA'S STRONGEST STATEMENT TO DATE ON TIMOR. PEACOCK SAID QTE THE
AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT HAS REMINDED THE INDONESIAN AUTHORITIES
OF AUSTRALIA'S OPPOSITION TO THE USE OF FORCE IN EAST TIMOR.

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END QTE NOTING AUSTRALIA'S DISAPPOINTMENT THAT THE NEW AUTHORITIES

IN DILI HAD ASKED THE UN TO POSTPONE THE PLANNED VISIT OF ITS REPRESENTATIVES, PEACOCK ADDED, QTE THE AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT'S POSITION IS CLEAR. WE BELIEVE THE UN REPRESENTATIVE SHOULD LEAVE FOR EAST TIMOR IMMEDIATELY AND THAT HE SHOULD BE ADMITTED WITHOUT DELAY OR PREVARICATION. END QTE PEACOCK , REACTING STRONGLY TO ALLEGATIONS THAT AUSTRALIA HAD TURNED ITS BACK ON TIMOR, WENT ON TO CLAIM THAT THE GOA HAD BEEN MORE ACTIVE THAN ANY OTHER COUNTRY IN TRYING TO BRING A PEACEFUL END TO THE FIGHTING IN EAST TIMOR.

3. PUBLIC REACTION TO THE SITUATION IN TIMOR IS HEATING UP. PLANS TO SEND WHAT WAS REFERRED TO AS A QTE DUNKIRK-STYLE ARMADA END QTE TO RESCUE REFUGEES FROM EAST TIMOR WERE ABANDONED ON DEC. 29 AFTER MUCH PUBLICITY. THE ORGANIZERS SAID THAT THEY CANCELLED THEIR EFFORT BECAUSE FRETELIN LEADERS HAD RADIOED DARWIN THAT THEY WOULD NOT BE ABLE TO GET BY THE INDONESIAN NAVAL BLOCKADE. THE FORMER LABOR MINISTER FOR URBAN DEVELOPMENT, MR. UREN, WHO WAS IMPRISONED ON TIMOR FOR 9 MONTHS IN WORLD WAR II, ALSO CABLED PRIME MINISTER FRASER ASKING THAT AUSTRALIAN SHIPS AND PLANES BE SENT TO LIFT OFF ANY TIMORESE WHO WISH TO LEAVE THE ISLAND. UREN CITED THE MANY EAST TIMORESE WHO HAD RISKED THEIR LIVES SHELTERING AND HELPING AUSTRALIAN TROOPS DURING WW II.

4. COMMENT: THE GOA IS BECOMING MORE AND MORE CONCERNED ABOUT THE HARMFUL EFFECT TIMOR IS HAVING ON ITS RELATIONS WITH THE GOI. PARTLY TO PLACATE PUBLIC OPINION, THE FRASER INTERIM GOVERNMENT DURING THE FINAL DAYS OF THE AUSTRALIAN ELECTION CAMPAIGN WENT FURTHER IN ITS OPPOSITION TO GOI MILITARY INTERVENTION IN EAST TIMOR THAN DID THE FORMER WHITLAM GOVERNMENT. THE NEW GOVERNMENT CAN CLAIM TO HAVE INHERITED THE TIMOR SITUATION. HOWEVER, THE FUNDAMENTAL DILEMMA REMAINS. THE GOA BELIEVES THAT IT MUST PAY AT LEAST LIP SERVICE TO THE PRINCIPLE OF SELF-DETERMINATION IN EAST TIMOR. IT ALSO FEELS COMPELLED TO OPPOSE PUBLICLY INDONESIAN MILITARY INTERVENTION. AT THE SAME TIME, MAINTENANCE OF GOOD RELATIONS WITH THE GOI IS ABSOLUTELY FUNDAMENTAL TO AUSTRALIAN FOREIGN POLICY.

5. FORMER PRIME MINISTER WHITLAM DID MUCH TO UNDERCUT PRIVATE AUSTRALIAN WARNINGS TO INDONESIA THAT THE GOA COULD NOT CONDONE USE OF INDONESIAN FORCE IN TIMOR ON AUGUST 29, 1975 WHEN HE TOLD THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES THAT QTE THE LAST OF THREE APPEALS
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ADDRESSED THIS WEEK BY THE PORTUGUESE GOVERNMENT TO THE SECRETARY-GENERAL OF THE UN HAS SPOKEN OF THE NEED FOR INTERNATIONAL INTERVENTION TO EFFECT A CEASE-FIRE.

6. QTE THE INDONESIAN GOVERNMENT, WHICH OVER THE PAST YEAR HAS EXPRESSED REPEATEDLY ITS INTENTION NOT TO INTERVENE IN TIMOR, MAY THUS BE TURNED TO AS THE ONLY FORCE CAPABLE OF RESTORING CALM IN THE TERRITORY. END QTE THIS STATEMENT WAS MADE IN ANTICIPATION

OF A QUICK AND EFFECTIVE INDONESIAN MILITARY ACTION IN EAST TIMOR WHICH DID NOT COME ABOUT.

7. AUSTRALIA'S PRESENT POLITICAL PROBLEM IS FURTHER COMPLICATED BY THE FACT THAT, ALSO IN AUGUST, IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, THE LEADER OF THE NATIONAL COUNTRY PARTY AND NOW DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER, MR. ANTHONY, CALLED FRETELIN QTE THE PRO-COMMUNIST GROUP END QTE AND SUGGESTED THAT IF FRETELIN WON CONTROL OF THE TERRITORY IT COULD LEAD TO THE ESTABLISHMENT OF QTE YET ANOTHER SOVIET NAVAL BASE IN THE INDIAN OCEAN. END QTE ANTHONY ADDED THAT THE SITUATION MIGHT REQUIRE QTE A JOINT POLICE FORCE END QTE GOING INTO TIMOR. NOW PRIME MINISTER FRASER SUPPORTED ANTHONY'S REMARKS. THERE IS LITTLE DOUBT THAT THE GOI TOOK THESE STATEMENTS AS AT LEAST AUSTRALIAN ACQUIESCENCE FOR THEIR INTERVENTION INTO TIMOR.

8. CLOSE RELATIONS WITH THE GOI REMAIN ESSENTIAL TO THE GOA. THEREFORE, THE NEW GOVERNMENT WILL DO EVERYTHING IT CAN TO COOL OFF PUBLIC REACTION AGAINST THE GOI. HOWEVER, TENSION BETWEEN THE TWO GOVERNMENTS WILL PERSIST AND INCREASE FAILING A RAPID INDONESIAN MILITARY TAKEOVER OF TIMOR. END COMMENT.
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